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(12) **United States Patent**
Vijayan et al.

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(54) **METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR PROVIDING A VISUAL SEARCH DIRECTORY**

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( * ) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 277 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **09/618,983**

(22) Filed: **Jul. 19, 2000**

(51) Int. Cl.$^7$ .............................................. G06F 17/30
(52) U.S. Cl. ........................ 707/104; 707/100; 707/102
(58) Field of Search ................................ 707/104, 102, 707/3, 1, 2, 6, 7, 10

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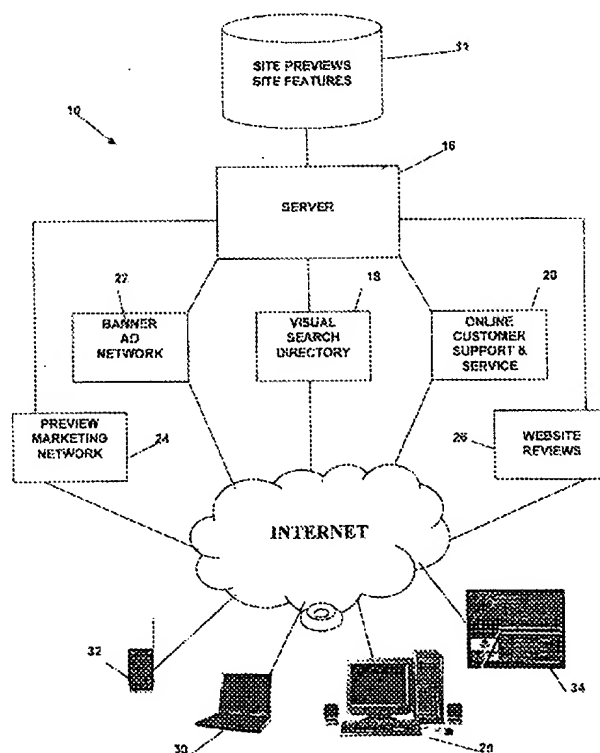| | | | | |
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A system and method for visually and functionally extending the reach of web sites includes a plurality of interactive, animated, multimedia previews of web sites organized into a searchable database. The searchable database is stored on a central server and forms the backend of a visual search directory. Users access the database through an interface that allows them to perform a search and receive results from the search in the form of animated, multimedia previews of relevant web sites.

13 Claims, 47 Drawing Sheets

US-PAT-NO:              6535888

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER:    US 6535888 B1

TITLE:                  Method and system for providing a visual search
                        directory

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INVENTOR-INFORMATION:
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COUNTRY
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US-CL-CURRENT:     707/100, 707/102

ABSTRACT:

   A system and method for visually and functionally extending the reach of web
sites includes a plurality of interactive, animated, multimedia previews of web
sites organized into a searchable database.  The searchable database is stored
on a central server and forms the backend of a visual search directory.  Users
access the database through an interface that allows them to perform a search
and receive results from the search in the form of animated, multimedia
previews of relevant web sites.

13 Claims,  47 Drawing figures

Exemplary Claim Number:     1

Number of Drawing Sheets:    47


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US Patent No. - PN (1):

   6535888


Detailed Description Text - DETX (28):

   The search results can be organized within the results window in a plurality
of different manners.  In a presently preferred embodiment, the search results
are ranked using a pay-for-placement system similar to that used by GOTO.COM.
Advertisers can bid for priority placement in the search results.  The
advertiser with the highest bid is listed first in the search results, with the
remaining advertiser appearing in descending bid amount order.  Priority
placement increases the likelihood that a consumer or potential consumer will
elect to watch the preview, and hopefully click-through to the advertiser's
site once the preview has finished.  In a presently preferred embodiment,
advertisers only pay the amount of their bid when a consumer or potential
consumer clicks-through the preview to go to their site.  Those skilled in the
art should realize that other systems may additionally or alternatively be
utilized to organize the search results.  For example, the top results can be
provided through the results window, and any remaining results can be accessed
through a pop-up scrollable panel on the side of the viewer.  This would allow

more results to be presented through the search directory, while still placing a premium on appearing in the default results window.


Claims Text - CLTX (7):

   7.   The visual search directory according to claim 6 further comprising a bidding system for allowing advertisers to submit bids for priority placement within the retrieved search results, and wherein the priority placement system generates the ranking order based on the bids submitted through the bidding system.


Claims Text - CLTX (10):

   10.   The method according to claim 8 further comprising the step of ranking the order in which the retrieved search results are presented to the user based on bids submitted by advertisers for priority placement within the retrieved search results.


Claims Text - CLTX (13):

   13.   The visual search directory according to claim 11 further comprising: means for advertisers to submit bids for priority placement in retrieved search results, and means for generating a ranking order in which the retrieved search results are presented to the user, wherein the ranking order is generated based on bids submitted by advertisers.